

Gender Inequality: An obstacle to sustainable development

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Palavras-chave— desigualdade de gênero; desenvolvimento sustentável; ODS; mercado de trabalho; globalização.

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Mots-clés— inégalité entre les sexes ; le développement durable; ODD ; marché du travail; mondialisation.

Abstract— This article addresses gender inequality, placing it in the context of contemporary society, influenced by neoliberal capitalism, which privileges the culture and way of life of the white population as a universal value. It points out that the deep origins of material inequalities between men and women go beyond mere arbitrarily motivated discrimination by gender, reaching social structures through which capitalist societies shaped human activity, both in the market and in the family, ignoring the advances made by legal instruments. It also highlights that sustainability must go beyond the management of human resources, including issues related to the population that suffers from socio-environmental injustices due to racial, ethnic or gender reasons and the urgent need for the broad recognition that women are an essential part of sustainability and the resolution of several problems that affect contemporary societies.

Resumo— Este artigo aborda a desigualdade de gênero, situando-a no contexto da sociedade contemporânea, influenciada pelo capitalismo neoliberal, que privilegia a cultura e o modo de vida da população branca como valor universal. Aponta que as origens profundas das desigualdades materiais entre homens e mulheres estão além da mera discriminação motivada arbitrariamente pelo gênero, alcançando estruturas sociais pelas quais as sociedades capitalistas moldaram a atividade humana, tanto no mercado como na família, ignorando os avanços obtidos pelos instrumentos jurídicos. Destaca ainda que a sustentabilidade deve ir além da gestão dos recursos humanos, incluindo questões referentes à população que sofre com injustiças socioambientais devido a razões raciais, étnicas ou de gênero e a necessidade urgente do reconhecimento amplo de que as mulheres são parte essencial para a sustentabilidade e a resolução de diversos problemas que acometem as sociedades contemporâneas.

Resumen— Este artículo aborda la desigualdad de género, situándola en el contexto de la sociedad contemporánea, influenciada por el capitalismo neoliberal, que privilegia la cultura y forma de vida de la población blanca como un valor universal. Señala que los orígenes profundos de las desigualdades materiales entre hombres y mujeres van más allá de la mera discriminación de género arbitrariamente motivada. Llegando a las estructuras sociales a través de las cuales las sociedades capitalistas moldearon la actividad humana, tanto en el mercado como

en la familia, desconociendo los avances de los instrumentos jurídicos. También destaca que la sustentabilidad debe ir más allá de la gestión de los recursos humanos, incluyendo temas relacionados con la población que sufre injusticias socioambientales por razones raciales, étnicas o de género y la urgente necesidad del amplio reconocimiento de que las mujeres son parte esencial de la sustentabilidad y la resolución de diversos problemas que afectan a las sociedades contemporáneas.

Resumée— *Cet article aborde l'inégalité entre les sexes, en la situant dans le contexte de la société contemporaine, influencée par le capitalisme néolibéral, qui privilégie la culture et le mode de vie de la population blanche comme valeur universelle. Il souligne que les origines profondes des inégalités matérielles entre les hommes et les femmes sont plus qu'une simple discrimination sexuelle motivée par l'arbitraire. atteindre les structures sociales à travers lesquelles les sociétés capitalistes ont façonné l'activité humaine, tant sur le marché que dans la famille, ignorant les avancées des instruments juridiques. Il souligne également que la durabilité doit aller au-delà de la gestion des ressources humaines, y compris les questions liées à la population qui souffre d'injustices socio-environnementales pour des raisons raciales, ethniques ou de genre, et le besoin urgent d'une large reconnaissance que les femmes sont un élément essentiel de la durabilité et de la résolution des divers problèmes qui affectent les sociétés contemporaines.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In place of the so-called studies on women, gender studies emerged in the 1970s, initially in the field of Social Sciences and today approached by several other areas of knowledge, as they are the same interdisciplinary, whose objective is to break with the tendency to seek in biological determinism the explanation for the inequalities between men and women, thus promoting, among other things, the overcoming of the theories of sexual roles and the complementarity of the sexes. Therefore, analyzing gender inequalities consists of understanding the relationships between men and women in different spaces of society.

The concept of gender used here does not follow a single theoretical perspective, and can be directed to three different axes:

- a. The origins of patriarchy to justify the submission of women to men by the need that the latter has to transcend himself through the reproduction of the species;
- b. The subordination of women from the angle of historicity, explaining the inequalities between the sexes from the point of view of productive relations;
- c. The foundations of the French Psychoanalyst School, which is based on language, communication, interpretation and representation of the genre, not only referring to

written and verbal language, but also including symbolism and meanings.

From this direction, the definition of the classic theorist Elisabeth Souza Lobo (1991) was taken, where gender is a category of social relationship that crosses history and the social fabric, institutions and mentalities, theories about family, market of work, citizenship, political parties, social movements and subjectivities, in the perspective of understanding the social meaning of female work and the insertion of women in the market for the production of goods and services, where they acquire a new identity and discover themselves as a person in the interaction with the other, in a relationship of reciprocity and exchange.

In this sense, the analysis of gender inequalities consists of identifying how the relationships between men and women are constituted in terms of the distribution of power or, what is the social equivalence between male and female genders. Both official statistics brought by the IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, as well as studies carried out at the academy, show the existence of inequalities between men and women, exemplified by the low political representation of women in parliament; low salaries compared to men who have the same level of education and hold identical positions in organizations; the trivialization of violence against women and the feminization of poverty, in addition to the double

working day, when they enter the salaried market, when they return from formal work, they start another domestic journey, preparing meals, cleaning the house, taking care of the children, guiding the school tasks.

This energy expenditure generates negative impacts on their physical and mental health, preventing them from taking care of themselves, doing leisure activities, recovering physical stress through rest, eating properly and sleeping for the time recommended by the World Organization of health, which requires a rethinking of this gender inequality, in order to reduce such inequities, because gender differences are predominantly of social and structural origin, so that man, as a category, has more social power than the woman, also as a category.

On the subject, the classic author Saffioti (1992) emphasizes the fundamental role of "power" institutions in legitimizing sexual stereotypes. She says that "The role of religious, educational and juridical doctrines has always been to affirm the meaning of masculine and feminine, built within power relations" (1992). From this perspective, the notion of biologically determined sexes should be abandoned, where the man is endowed with the so-called virile qualities, such as courage, strength, sexual vigor, greater capacity to enter the better paid professions, while the woman presents herself as fragile, incapable of assume command positions and equipped for the activities of caring for the home, family and the elderly.

The 1988 Federal Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women, with special emphasis on the labor sphere. Since then, public policies have been created to combat discrimination and prevent the female workforce from being purposefully segregated or disqualified, however, despite the legal and normative achievements, gender discrimination continued to manifest itself in different ways in Brazil (Hirata, 2007).

During the Vargas era, there were important advances with significant repercussions on women's emancipation with maternity protection and equal labor rights for men and women and the fight against discrimination in employment; the prohibition for the employer to adopt admission criteria based on sex, skin color and marital status; and guaranteed the right to retirement for

women after 30 years of contribution.

It is clear that such advances in Brazil were due to the conventions of the International Labor Organization, especially numbers 100 and 111, which deal with equal pay for men and women workers and equal treatment in employment, and of which the Brazil is a signatory and that contributed to the confrontation of obstacles faced by

women (MARTINS, 2009). As Bourdieu (2011) states, the work that suits women is still situated in the extension of domestic functions: teaching, care, service. Perhaps for this reason, the growth of women's participation in the formal job market since the 1970s, although it has significantly modified their role in the family environment and in society, even contributing to the configuration of new family models, has not changed in the same way. proportion to their social and identity representation, still associated with domestic, educational and assistance tasks in the family environment, and with "female" occupations in the work environment, which, in practice, are similar jobs, because, despite requiring knowledge and specific technical skills such as care practices that involve the worker emotionally.

Labor legislation to protect women's work has extended maternity leave from 90 to 120 days, without prejudice to employment and salary, including for domestic, independent and rural workers (LOPES, 2006). Another significant innovation in the field of social rights was the guarantee of the pregnant woman's employment from the confirmation of pregnancy until five months after delivery, prohibiting her dismissal during this period. Among many other advances, the articles that authorized the husband's interference in the adult woman's employment contract were removed from the CLT - Confederation of Labor Laws (Law 7.855/89).

It can be seen, therefore, that the equality of rights between the genders is not resolved simply through legislative texts that announce a new reality. There is a distance between fact and law, because, in reality, the facts that generate the exclusion of women in society are rooted in the essence of society's patriarchal culture, which imposes the recognition of a set of values, beliefs and attitudes, in such a way that the man considers himself, by the simple nature, superior to the woman. This leads to the social construction of law and politics by instituting two situations: a visible one, which is the so-called equality of all before the law; another, invisible, which is effective inequality. However, what must be sought is equality through inequalities. And, for this to come to fruition, it is important to bring to light for reflection, that inequality is not universal and homogeneous, as some desecrate, but dynamic and continuous, because it runs through various social aspects in which the different collective groups of women, depending on a greater or lesser intensity of oppression.

From a sociological point of view, patriarchy constitutes the basis of exclusion, that is, the set of mechanisms that are rooted in the structure of a society, from which certain people or groups are rejected or

despised from their full participation in culture, in economy and politics of the society in which they live.

Despite the struggles for gender equality, undertaken by urban and rural feminist movements; the development of policies for equality in the world of work; the expressive insertion and participation of workers in the service sector, identified by different studies as one of the great employers in the Brazilian urban economic scenario; the analysis reveals, through processes of "feminization and feminization of professional occupations," a persistent sexual division of labor (YANNOULAS, 2011; 2013).

Given this, the question is: what explains the permanence of wage disparity and female occupational segregation in Brazilian society, despite constitutional advances?

A ready answer to this question does not exist, however, Sorj (2001) considers some assumptions, such as: the changes that have taken place in the labor market in relation to the increase in women's participation stem from a set of changes suffered by Brazilian society such as the reduction of fecundity; the number of formal marriages; the increase in unmarried women; increase in the elderly population with a strong female presence; higher life expectancy for women compared to men; expansion of schooling; reduction in family size, economic-financial globalization, reducing barriers to the movement of capital on a world scale; productive restructuring, with the introduction of the flexible accumulation model; and the technological revolution with the convergence of communications, telecommunications and information technology, without which the phenomena of accelerating production, circulation and consumption times and the compression of space would not have been possible.

The author recalls that in the world of work, social inequalities are structured not only from the division between owners of the means of production and holders of the workforce, but also between genders, occupations, qualifications, productive sectors and formal and informal labor markets and that the explanation for the permanence of these phenomena must also be sought in historical-structural characteristics of Brazilian society and in an interrelated set of demographic, social, economic, political and cultural changes, largely related to the more recent structural transformations, which took place after the crisis of capitalism in the 1970s.

Therefore, thinking about social transformation involves transgressing the norms of behavior, domination and power imposed by society on genders, which does not mean the exclusion of the masculine, but thinking about men and women from the relational character of power, where the themes equality and inequality can be reflected

in several aspects. But this is not a simple task, because breaking with cultural paradigms requires time and political-social training, in addition to the institutionalization of legal norms and their operation, which has not been satisfactorily occurring in Brazil.

Even in the case of women who manage to penetrate the corporate world, the presence of discriminatory mechanisms can be seen. It is rare for women in these large corporations to reach the highest hierarchical positions - a phenomenon known as the "glass ceiling," as such positions are usually reserved for men.

This article aims to prove that the fight against gender discrimination through labor legislation has not been able to eliminate inequalities between men and women in the world of work, but also to point out initiatives to promote gender equity, requiring organizations to break in their sexist culture.

II. GENDER EQUALITY AND THE SDGs – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the United Nations' universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity (2030 AGENDA).

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) outlined objectives, targets and indicators for this action, drawing up 17 goals to be met by the Nations by 2030, hence the name Agenda 2030.

Goal number 5 – GENDER EQUALITY, focuses on equality between women and men and the empowerment of all girls and women for a better world. As already mentioned in this article, it is possible to see advances in gender relations in all parts of the world, however, according to the UN document - United Nations, one billion women and girls aged 15 and over are illiterate. And more girls than boys are out of school. Poverty also has a woman's face: between the ages of 25 and 34, women are 25% more likely to live in extreme poverty than men. As for child marriage, around 12 million girls are married before the age of 18 annually worldwide (2030 AGENDA).

UN Women put the gender issue in perspective in the report Gender equality: women's rights in review 25 years after Beijing, highlighting the inequities suffered by women, especially black women, emphasizing that the development of any country depends on the fair distribution of benefits or of responsibilities between men and women, according to their differences and respective needs. Equal rights in marriage; in access to education; in job and income opportunities; in a life free from poverty,

according to the second article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which says: “everyone is capable of enjoying the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind [...]”. Thus, it is necessary to end all forms of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls, as written in the first goals of SDG 5,

since development and democracy in the country will not be consolidated until this social discrepancy is resolved.

Claiming their place in the debate on sustainable development and in the decisions to be taken, women opened space for the discussion of the development model that was then implemented in the 70s and 80s of the last century, denouncing its environmental and also social unsustainability, gaining strength articulation of peasant women in the struggle for agrarian reform; the struggle for equal rights by the women's collective of the Landless Rural Workers Movement and others that were consolidated over time.

In the Beijing platform in the 1990s, the participation of women in the environmental debate was strongly defended, as they are, due to their essence as caregivers, the best to implement any actions that benefit future generations and, ultimately, societies as a whole. a whole (UN Women, 1995). The text says:

“As consumers, producers, educators and responsible for the care of their families, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development through concern for the quality and sustainability of life for current and future generations “(UN WOMEN, 1995).

Thus, women became the main instrument for the implementation of actions and policies against the degradation of the environment, against poverty, against child malnutrition, against illiteracy and the low access of children to school education and against the great controllable epidemics. around the world. At the national level, there have been advances and setbacks, as already explained in this text, however, thinking about women and the environment necessarily involves the struggle for land, because it is about territories that the environmental dispute takes place, emphasizing the omission of the state in the demarcation of indigenous lands, quilombolas and populations of African origins.

Despite the struggles, women's autonomy has a long way to go, as it largely depends on the recognition of their contribution to sustainable economic and social development, as protagonists in transformations, capable of interfering in public policies.

By sustainability, what is being considered here is the ability of a process or form of resource appropriation to continue to exist for a long period of time. It is a concept linked to sustainable development, that is, “development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (CMMD, 1991). Sustainability not as a way of doing, but as a way of being.

In this perspective, a feminine look is essential within the environmental sphere, with a view to providing a critical look at the social origins of environmental problems that affect, in a non-homogeneous way, different human groups and communities, particularly women. The role that women have been playing in agroecological production systems cannot be ignored, where the binomial woman - environment is a sine qua non condition for the theme of sustainability.

At the Second International Conference on Women (1980), in Copenhagen, something very relevant was the recognition that women were never on the sidelines of the socio-economic process of their countries, but, on the contrary, were always “integrated”, only under conditions unequal, and it is up to development policies to lay their foundations on the promotion of women as an unequal subject and not a needy subject. However, five years later, at the third International Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, it was found that most of the problems discussed in Copenhagen remained unchanged, questioning the validity of these meetings (DI CIOMMO, 1999).

On sustainability, Ignacy Sachs (2002), proposes the dimensions that must be taken into account for its effectiveness:

1. Social – Fair income distribution, full employment with decent quality of life and equal access to social resources and services by women.
2. Cultural – Balance between respect for tradition and innovation and self-confidence, combined with openness to the world.
3. Preservation of the potential of natural capital in its production of renewable resources and limiting the use of non-renewable resources.
4. Environmental – Respect for the self-purification capacity of natural ecosystems.
5. Territorial – Balanced urban and rural configurations, with improvement of the urban environment, overcoming inter-regional disparities and environmentally sound development strategies for ecologically fragile areas.
6. Economic - Balanced economic development, with food security, modernization of production instruments,

autonomy in scientific and technological research and national sovereignty.

7. National Policy – Universal appropriation of human rights and social cohesion.

8. International Policy – Guarantee of peace and promotion of international cooperation, based on the principle of equality and precaution in the management of the environment and natural resources; in the protection of biodiversity; in controlling climate change, as a common heritage of humanity.

By emphasizing these dimensions, Sachs makes it clear that, in order to achieve sustainability, we must value people, their customs and knowledge. It is evident that a holistic view of society's problems must be taken, in addition to focusing only on the management of natural resources. In this sense, several emerging issues arise that converge several challenges, for example, combating hunger, the right to land for landless workers and indigenous people, environmental justice in relation to minorities and gender issues. It is a much deeper thought, which aims at a true metamorphosis of the current civilization model.

Therefore, thinking about sustainable development with a gender perspective implies formulating intervention proposals based on equity between women and men and carrying out proposals for institutional change with a more egalitarian and democratic objective.

The review of the reality of gender in countries such as Cuba, Brazil and Mexico, found some similarities and some differences in projects financed by international organizations developed by them. According to the publication of the results of the "Cuba, Mujeres y Hombres y Desarrollo Sostenible" Project, financed by the UNDP, women proved to be excellent administrators of natural resources, but few participate actively in decision-making processes around environmental issues at the local and regional; in Mexico, the Programa de Innovación Agropecuaria Local, women are more aware of the usefulness of medicinal and ornamental plants, the diversity of seeds and the planting of home gardens, while men are more knowledgeable about forest resources and forestry activities for commercial purposes, as well as in relation to large-scale food planting. In the three countries (Cuba, Brazil and Mexico), there was an inequality in the distribution of domestic tasks. While the woman is responsible for taking care of the children, the elderly and the sick, in addition to all the other duties of the house, the man is responsible for the major decisions, the resulting exercise of power, the ownership of land and the administration of finances.

As the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) states, "working with a gender approach means considering the needs and interests of different groups of women (peasants, indigenous people, quilombolas, salaried workers, unpaid family workers, youth, etc.), in the formulation and execution of policies, programs and projects that take into account access, use and control over productive resources, with a view to transforming power relations, because the contribution of women is eminent in the advances made in the country in all dimensions, but this recognition is still largely obscured.

In the same direction, Barbosa (2012) states that the role of women has not only been to manage the education and training of children, youth and adults; the role of women is also to support the economy, lead in education, research, technology, innovation and socio-economic development in the Region. According to him, sustainability is a process that brings together a set of rationally developed productive activities; privileges human beings and nature, and then considers profits and increasing wealth.

Furtado and Teixeira (2009) show that women experience more strongly the need to define their citizenship, looking for the right scenario to develop their individuality, while fighting to protect what they consider the fundamental nucleus of their existence: the air, the water and soil, to which he links his life, his work, his dreams. So it's time to wake up and agree that investing in women is a great catalyst for sustainable development.

Women's groups themselves admit that struggles in defense of participation and equality will only materialize when the transformation of unequal patterns of gender and class, rooted in cultural models, such as patriarchal, bourgeois and sexist culture takes place.

The role of women in relation to political dimensions, national and international, is highlighted by Maathai and Robinson (2010):

The absence of women, particularly in the Southern hemisphere, from national and international discussions and decision-making on climate change and development must change. The battle to protect the environment isn't just about technological innovation - it's also about empowering women and their communities to hold their governments accountable for results. They can also help ensure that other powerful actors, such as the private sector, are also held accountable. To make a real difference,

women need greater access to the education, resources and new technologies needed to plan for adaptation in response to environmental change. Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies must be developed with women, not for them, and women must participate alongside men at all stages of policy decisions regarding climate and development.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research that supported this article was descriptive in nature, as it sought to present some aspects of inequality in the various dimensions between men and women in Brazil and in other parts of the world. For that, the theories of classical and post-modernist authors were used, among which, Bruschini and Lombardi (2002), Bruschini (2007), Hirata and Kergoat (2007), Abramo (2007), Cappellin (2008), Souza -Lobo (2011), Melo and Di Sabbato (2011), Saffioti (2013), Barbosa (2014), Abreu, Hirata and Lombardi (2016), whose studies analyze the sexual division of labor and the reproduction of gender inequalities in the world of work and in the family. Also, an attempt was made to relate women's participation in sustainable development, in order to establish a balance between the productive forces of a globalized society, based on objective 5 of the 2030 Agenda, which deals with the theme.

IV. SOME CONSIDERATIONS

The concept of gender created by the feminist movement and later adopted by various sociological currents is relatively new and has contributed greatly to denaturalizing inequality between women and men, stating that the construction of being feminine and being masculine is not biological, but social and cultural.

The power relations that prevent women from reaching the highest decision-making positions in organizations and even within the family, create a scenario of imbalance in society, negatively impacting the process of development and consolidation of democracy. The equal participation of women in decision-making is not only a basic requirement of justice, but a necessary condition for their interests to be taken into account and the incorporation of their point of view in the search for equality, development and peace, according to the Art. 183 of the Platform for World Action, approved in Beijing, by 189 countries.

The development of equality between men and women in today's societies demands, therefore, a double intervention: in the structures of society itself and in the legal-political forms of action, since it is impossible for women to exercise their roles fully, without being granted rationality and authority. It is useless for women to be considered free and equal if they occupy, in the face of patriarchal society, an inferior social status, which positions them only as an oppressed social group.

In view of this, it is essential that the required transformations be carried out, so that material equality is materialized in the principle of equal opportunities, through policies that go from the mere enunciation of the principle of equality before the laws to the field of real equality between women and men. What must be sought is the granting of full citizenship to women, transforming the concept of political representation, through parity democracy, so that true egalitarian politics can concretely promote equality between the sexes, compensating for the historical discrimination against the person of the woman, to put an end to the privileges directed exclusively to men, the result of a patriarchal conception that still persists in several public and private institutions. As can be seen, gender and race inequalities are structuring axes of the matrix of social inequality in Brazil, which, in turn, is at the root of the permanence and reproduction of situations of poverty and social exclusion. Therefore, facing these inequalities means dealing with a structural characteristic of Brazilian society, whose transformation is essential for overcoming the deficits in decent work that currently exist, as well as for the effective fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals.

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